THE STUDY OF THE INDIAN FASHION SYSTEM WITH A SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON WOMEN'S OCCASION WEAR

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ABSTRACT

The versatile draped silhouettes & heritage craft traditions redefined for contemporary connoisseurs; have further led to the rising acceptance of Indian ethnic/ fusion fashion as a paradigm shift for India to discern and emphasize local inimitability, to create a sense of belonging and stimulate consumption of a culturally promoted "Global-Desi" fashion dictum across cultures. This paper presents the study of major factors contributing to the Indian fashion system interpreting its engagement with the Indian society and also the world.

This research highlights impact of the Indian Fashion system on the Indian society and its meaning. There is continued interest for classical Indian dress silhouettes, heritage textile crafts, accessories; this study concentrates on outcomes through the lens of history, culture, and sociology of fashion. The neue urban tribes and fashion social movements in the post- modern era led emergence of the apparel category- occasion wear; reserved for weddings, festivals, formal evening wear for parties. There is opportunity for exploring the hyper reality through the represented garment simulation in the occasion wear category. The Neue urban tribe creates lasting footprints through interpretation of the Indian Fashion System enroute popular culture; Bollywood and the satellite television. The semiotic approach to decode the nuance of the Indian fashion system embedded in popular culture through visual media like, family albums, films, magazine articles, red carpets appearance etc. across the 80's, 90's and 2000 onwards . The neue Indian women perceive the sari, salwarkameez, bandgala jackets, as essential inclusions of their contemporary wardrobes as they rendezvous their global counterpart in quest of cool hunting (Fashion Identity), trendsetting. Thus number and variety in types of fashion apparel will have a positive relationship with the role of women in society and their education level, profession and will provide future trend directions for occasion wear.

Operational Definitions

Global-Desi (An Indian term for global yet local Indian, local; Neue Indians), Khadi (fabric which is hand spun and hand woven in India, often referred as Fabric of freedom)

Marshall McLuhan's 'Global Village'

Communication theorist McLuhan was ahead of his time, writing about technology in the 1960's, his arguments seems even more relevant today in the internet age. McLuhan argues that the proliferation of electronic technology has extended our biological senses of sight and sound beyond their normal range. He is saying that through technology such as the telephone or television we are able to communicate instantaneously across the globe, which consequently impacts by speeding up the global economy and social life. McLuhan argues that due to technology and its instant communication we feel as close to someone on the other side of the globe as if they were in our own village. Therefore we can understand why McLuhan says we are in a 'global village'.

INTRODUCTION

India is emerging as a strong knowledge economy therefore globally people have been intrigued by India; be it the TajMahal (Tourist destination), Yoga (holistic fitness), Ayurveda (natural healing), Bollywood (Kitch entertainment) where each signifies the favored fashion and lifestyle trends; notably towards Indian fashions, apparel and textiles. India has a rich legacy of heritage textile traditions and wide range of ethnic costume traditions comprising versatile draped silhouettes and classic tailoring techniques; across the subcontinent, suitable to the terrain, weather and the regional socio-cultural influences due to various invasions and the colonial past. There is continued interest for classical Indian dress silhouettes, heritage textile crafts, accessories, and grooming practices among the western ateliers ever since the colonial past; where Indian cotton was the raw material for feeding the British mills during industrial revolution in the early 20th century & Pashmina wool shawls are a luxury fashion classic. This paper dwells upon the Indian fashion system with a special emphasis on womens wear as pursuit of fashion has been perceived to be synonymous with women, and there is opportunity for studying Indian fashion system.

The Indian women have been an integral part of the family, and been confined to home. Social visionaries worked relentlessly towards women's empowerment post independence and emphasized on education as the roadmap to attain it. Till about the 1970's the Indian women dressed in their regional style and patronized the traditional textiles in the neighboring areas. The most sought after textile though was the **Banarsi Sari** for the bridal trousseau in the northern, eastern and western states, but down south the **Kanjeevaram brocades** found favor. Seema Goswami writes, 'In the days before India was divided in the name of religion, wearing a sari or shalwarkameez wasn't a function of which God you worshipped. What you wore pretty much depended on where you lived. In Punjab, women wore the shalwarkameez irrespective of whether they were Hindu or Muslim. And in Uttar Pradesh, Bengal and Bihar, they wore the sari, whatever their religious persuasion'. The sari consumption pattern of the women in rural India has also changed post the 90's, they have given up their traditional saris for cheaper mill made ones inspired by the television soap operas(popular culture) and also for practical purpose of affordability, visual appeal & maintenance.

Background Study References

"Barthes's book and his theory of Semiology of fashion have had a profound impact on the field. Fashion he argues is the product of the social relations and activities that are involved in putting an outfit together. Fashion is actualized through the way the garments are worn. Barthes makes a distinction between three kinds of garments:

- The Real garment

- The Represented garment

- And the used Garment, corresponding to the process of production, distribution and consumption.

Toby Slade, in his case study on Japan, argues that modernity actually stimulates tradition, for in modernity progress is constantly sought, yet constantly questioned, undermined and remodeled. Modernity, he says everywhere

repeatedly clothes itself in reconstructions of the past, recreating a national costume and inventing national traditions to authenticate the very idea of the nation itself. Simultaneously, the significance of place increases with globalization because it represents a threat due to the speed and flexibility with which ideologies and goods flow across national boundaries.

The French Post Modern Theorist - Jean Baudrillard, we now live in a world increasingly dominated by images and signs, which have become our primary reality. They are **simulations** of reality and we therefore live in a state of hyperreality, which has no reality beyond itself. We can use Las Vegas and Disney World as examples of hyper reality as they do not reference reality.

Research has been carried out on designing and development of various apparel categories and documenting changes in fashion trends and documentation of traditional textiles but little research has been conducted on understanding and documenting the Indian fashion system. This research will highlight impact of the Indian Fashion system on the Indian society, appropriation and its meaning. How does the Indian fashion system relate to Indian women and industry? The Occasion wear gives the opportunity for exploring the hyperreality through the represented garment.

OBJECTIVES

- To Study The Major Factors Contributing To The Indian Fashion System

- To Interpret The Indian Fashion Systems' Engagement With Weddings And Festivals

- To Interpret The Indian Fashion System's Engagement With Concept Of Evening Formals /The Party Wear

The methodology adopted for this study was to take the semiotic approach to decode the nuance of the Indian fashion system embedded in popular culture through visual media like family albums, films, communicated through multifaceted media avenues like magazine articles, red carpets appearances, runways, across the 80's, 90's and 2000 onwards brings forth the women's Fashion Identity of India. Since there are no appropriate devices which appear suitable to measure the Indian fashion system, it will be necessary to develop such measures, based on the researcher's own observation, understanding and review of secondary sources like books, research papers, magazines and internet. All measures are designed and developed primarily for a population of Indian college women graduates and post graduate programs. Collected big fat Indian wedding (consumerism/exhibitionism) wedding pictures across 80's, 90's and 2010 (3 images each , 9 images for visual deconstruction and semiotic approach). Online questionnaires using Google forms (50 respondents) and personal interviews schedule administered to designer to get their views on the topics. Focused group discussion with designers, manufacturers & consumers and collated all the information. Collected Bollywood film screenshots for role of women in Indian society depicted in Hindi films as Student, romantic, married, mother (3 images each, 12 images for visual deconstruction) and semiotic approach. A plan of analysis of data was made including methods for scoring and coding. The data was then computed and interpreted.

The Major Factors Contributing to the Indian Fashion System

The Fashion System gains momentum when women participate in the mainstream of the society. The Indian aesthetics absorbed the western fashion and technological trends gradually throughout the 20th century. The Indian fashion scene began receiving its due credibility and attention from 80's onwards: hence this paper focuses on the 80's (closed economy), 90's (opening up of the Apparel Industry), new millennium 21st century to understand the Indian

Fashion System. The new millennium has seen revolutionary change across the socio-economic Diasporas of India due to humongous efforts of the past and the globalization. The Indian women are seeking higher education, step-up from their conventional role as homemakers, mothers, wives along with a professional life and social life independent of the family, due to personal interests and inclinations. The information technology has brought the world closer and sudden economic growth has given the Indian women a great emancipation in terms of their sartorial practices. As these neue Indian women gear to take on various social and professional roles and lifestyles, they have embraced new garments in their wardrobe to meet these roles. The Internet and satellite television not only provides the information on latest world fashion trends but also an access to it even in tier 2 cities of India by means of online E-commerce portals and tele-shopping.

Rama Bijapurkar Writes in Her Article Titled the Whole Six Yards, (Forbes India, July 2013)

"Over the last two decades, several new 'culture classes' have emerged and older ones have morphed to define themselves through new customs, values, or new degrees of tolerances. The modern young upper class women are a distinct new culture class — at home in miniskirts and in sari and blouse ensembles that sizzle. She dresses like she could be anywhere in the world, in business suits or in jeans, living in homes that look like they could be anywhere in the world, serving food that embraces all cuisines; she shops at supermarkets and malls for her regular stuff, patronizes international and Indian brands, but will go to local markets for entertainment shopping — the opposite of what some other culture classes would do; she has domestic staff like her mother did, only these are more professional; she thinks of herself and her children as global citizens, English is the only family language and her family unit is built to live life king size — free from uniquely Indian traditions and social restraints that she grew up with. Market watchers would like to believe that this is the new Indian mainstream but that is naïve and wishful thinking.

Another large culture class is the rapidly prospering small business woman — shop owner, beauty parlor owner, tailoring establishment owner. She continues to transact in the vernacular with her family, vendors and staff but manages reasonable English with her customers who she needs to SMS; she eschews 'costly' big shops and big brands, and is a big fan of the 'imported' label. This label stands for 'cheaper', more exciting novelty available through her usual shops, sourced by people like her. Her children are her biggest teachers and modernizers."

These neue Indian women have frequently migrated for education and work opportunities from their native cities. These migrations have in a way set them free from the native community also led to an increase in inter-caste marriages, cosmopolitan social groups, and liberation from being known only by ones marital status; there are conservative pockets yet across India. Hence the internet gives them that opportunity of convenience, independence and familiarity to fit-in in the new place and role and ascertaining the upward mobility through the fashion look: **the represented garment.** There are also concerns for ascertaining one's own identity in the new place hence inclusions of ethic fashions for festive occasions. Limited information of a local market and accepted dress codes and quality (which conventionally was passed down by family and friends in the neighborhood) there is rise in purchase of fashion on online platforms.

Various initiatives by the Indian government towards women's empowerment, and the society being sensitized towards equal opportunities for both the genders has led to both parents/partners working in a family , which gives more disposable income for fashion and a huge spurt in retail brands both in the brick and click format. The open markets have led to democratizing access to fashion both in terms of availability and affordability for people across the socio-economic pyramid. Citing India's demographic and socio-political scenario, the top fashion brands are anchoring on this opportunity and are influencing the Indian fashion system as all levels of the fashion value chain. The economic liberalisation of India

in the '90s had a curious by-product in Indian fashion. Come festival time, you couldn't get away from heavily-embellished ensembles. Even veteran designers like Tarun Tahiliani and Ritu Kumar had to give in to clients' demands of outrageous clothes that flaunted the affluence of crystals, diamonds and gemstones. "But the well travelled, globally aware woman of today understands that less is more," says actress and socialite Suchitra Pillai. The 21st century Indians are globe-trotters and assimilates fashion acquisitions from their foreign tours along with their identity intact in indigenous dressing, which have been given a postmodern uplift by home born designers. This fusion space that we are living is where the transition from the represented garment to real garment is making the Indian Fashion system so dynamic and interesting.

'Surveying some of the major arbiters of taste, from politics, film and television soap opera. These compliment the development of branding and the impact of major companies. The big players in the commercial sector seek to influence what we wear through manufacturing, advertising and sponsoring powerful and seductive images that people want to emulate. The eccentric sari shopper is never likely to encounter the kind of fashion hegemony which means that in Western markets flares or long jackets may disappear entirely if they are not part of that season's styles. While 'fashions' in saris do happen, they are likely to guide only a small proportion of new sari buying each year. Women may buy one sari which is 'trendy', but will usually ensure it is inexpensive in case it is no longer wearable the following year. More expensive saris are rarely bought according to such short-lived trends, for as we have seen, the influences on taste go far beyond the latest soap operas to include fondly remembered national leaders and the timeless classics of a vast legacy of films, as well as regional, family and personal traditions', Mukulik. B. & Daniel. M.

TO INTERPRET THE INDIAN FASHION SYSTEM'S ENGAGEMENT WITH INDIAN SOCIETY
Indian Weddings Impact on the Fashion System

The Indian Fashion System's engagement with the Indian society is intrinsic and manifests itself through the epicenter of Indian Society's great institution of marriage. The marriage in Indian Society is about the alliance of two families, not exclusively of the couple, hence has many dynamic socio-economic and sometimes political undercurrents. The rituals and ceremonies of a traditional Indian wedding go on for a couple of days with certain indication for a dress code is prevalent in most communities and has few variations. The sari symbolized womanhood in Hindu culture hence the coming of age was signified by a transition from a skirt-blouse (Ghaghra-choli) to a more grown up garment; the sari. Even in contemporary India the sari is often a preferred ensemble for a school farewell party, the first cousin's or friends' wedding or to convey that a young lady is ready for courtship and /or marriage.

Traditionally the young bride was given a trousseau and some heirloom costumes and jewelry. The trousseau was prepared by the bride or her family to exhibit her skill of sewing and embroidery and "*streedhan*" in form of jewellery was for her financial security. However over a period of time social mal practices of dowry crept in on one side and on the other side the emancipated bride and her family, did not harness the skill of embroidery and sewing, thus the hand skill was lost from the household and hence need for outsourcing the trousseau. This is also the time around the 90's when India experienced the phenomenon of Designer fashions. These very urges of exhibitionism led to the phenomenon of Big Fat Indian Wedding's, destination weddings, theme weddings, Wedding planners, Bridal wear category, Bespoke services, Bridal make-up, Wedding Photographers and Film makers etc. The NRI reconnected with India through Bollywood style wedding concepts, one saw a surge in lavish NRI weddings.

The wedding data images collected for weddings across the various decades and communities has yielded some interesting observations: All the brides wore the traditional costumes for the wedding ceremony. The degree of

ornamentation has increased over a period of time. The overall presentation of the fashion look seems to represent the exhibitionism of the economic boom synonymous to the Big Fat Indian wedding, which was much simpler in closed economy of the 80's.Over a period of time the transition from the real garment to the represented garment is evident. One can observe that as the brides are getting emancipated even as they adorn a represented garment, they are confident about showing their real personas during the wedding ceremonies , in contrast to socially acceptable shy representation of the bride of the 80's.

Figure 1: All Images Collected From Respondents

      These days the brides often are unfamiliar to the fit and feel of the traditional costumes and adorn their designer bridal dresses worn only once or very rarely repeat it later in life. They are not used to carrying the heavy costume, drapes and jewelry. As they have worn casual wear or work formal fashions till that day. The neue brides seek specialist professional help for draping, makeup and poise. In earlier time the brides married at a younger age and were groomed to wear a sari and carry themselves well at home and were dressed up by friends and cousins retaining the family traditions.

The bridal wear was heirloom and worn often on important occasion post the wedding too. In both cases the elder women would give the approving nod as an endorsement atleast on the wedding day! It may therefore be accepted that the wedding dress has become a costume with the expansion of the Indian fashion system over the decades.

The intercaste marriages show the evidence of incorporating costume traditions of both communities and separate ceremonies or beautifully combined in the same ceremony. The NRI wedding is also great opportunity to present ones ethnic identity through "represented garment" of the NRI Bridal trousseau and celebrations and often more about exhibiting to the Extended Indian family their socio-economic status and lifestyle.

The Bridesmaids also appear more prepared and well turned out compared to earlier times; this is in a way preparation for their big day in future and probably seeks a suitor or a photo opportunity for being introduced to their boyfriend's family before the formal announcement.

The Bridesmaids and the brides for other functions besides the actual wedding: over the years seem more experimental and adopt the fusion space of Indo western fashion or atleast adopt a more generic Indian Ethnic fashion trend like an Anarkali Suit, Pre stitched sari gowns, salwar kameez; androgynous take on the sherwani jacket teamed with straight pants or Dhoti pants, Jodhpur breeches; sexy choli and lehenga /designer saris. Thus the hypothesis that the wedding dress has a positive relationship with the attitude of the Indian society towards fashion is proven.

Bollywood and Indian Fashion

One more very significant interpretation of the Indian Fashion System is enroute popular culture in terms of Mumbai Film Industry popularly known as **Bollywood** and the satellite television post the 90's when the movies came to every living room, before the cable TV one had to go to the cinema theater's to get the latest fashion updates or read filmy magazines. Bollywood entertainers would be incomplete without the female protagonist – heroine (represented beauty, grace, romance), the mother (Drama and sacrifice), the vamp (Demanding Matriarch/ Scheming Seductress); and off course the glamour of dance and music was the responsibility of the screen goddesses.

The young actress till the 80's could wear whatever she pleased in terms of fashion trends during the romantic outings, however when meeting the elders in the family, she had to represent herself as *a sushilkanya;* the most eligible bride to be. By the turn of the century and the influence of the Musical divas and music and dance videos in the west; the concept of item numbers came to Bollywood, the heroine would double up as the ultimate seductress, and often do cameo's in films which she is not the lead. These Item numbers would lead to live performances and a source of additional revenue and endorsements too. The leading ladies of Bollywood are often the cover girls for fashion magazines and showstoppers for fashion runways and brand ambassadors of leading fashion brands. The debate about these emancipated girls treated as an object of desire is endless.

Indian ideals of beauty ; Indian Mythology, art and architecture has enough examples to show the acceptance of eroticism, however after centuries of cultural transition with the advent of Mughal and Coloninal rule saw a lot of changes in the sartorial aesthetics. Cleavages were a taboo till the anvil of global fashion trends till the turn of the century, however midriff baring maybe acceptable to various degrees, from a modest choli to the bikini blouses and levels and backless blouses paired with chiffon saris, the waist size irrespective. The concept of the ideal body size also has undergone a huge change, where the voluptuous curvy body or often the pear shape body complemented he Indian costumes, the inclusions of the western silhouettes and the concept of size zero figure idealized by the world fashion media did impact self-esteem

of many Indian women who are curvy. The new fashion silhouettes also led to acceptance of the correct foundation garments to present the ideal body, hence lingerie got the prominence like never before and due inclusion in the Indian Fashion system. The fascination of Indian society with fair skin has been endless and the beauty industry has harnessed it, however with the endorsement of all skin and hair color campaigns and Indian 'supermodels' & 'beauty queens' acceptance worldwide, there seems to be a slight improvement in acceptance of natural skin color.

In the 21st century there is so much assistance available to women to present their dressed up selves, all the services (Designers/stylist, Makeup and Hair, Photography, fitness trainers, cosmetology, image consultancy etc.) are provided by the Indian Fashion System, which also carries risk of turning all the lovely ladies into look alike; if not clones at the parties. The women adorn themselves in the represented garment look to increase their desirability. However with the need for *lookism* fading off and women finding meaningful pursuits; hope the worn garment and the real garment too gets its due inclusion in the Indian Fashion system.

The Indian Fashion System

The Indian fashion system is very dynamic and its interpretation has been challenging sighting so many variables that govern and affect it. By the turn of the century India got its first edition of VOGUE, ELLE, GRAZIA, HARPER'S BAZAAR, MARIE CLAIRE etc. having dedicated fashion publications speaking about issues pertaining to fashion to the masses, organized fashion retail, fashion MNC's, and then the on slot of e-commerce, social media and information overload has made the world a small place. In this post modern-era one needs to find instant recognition as well as express ones individuality. Hence finding ones **fashion tribe** is a constant pursuit for both the providers and consumers of Fashion. The Indian fashion system is shaped by providers like Textile craftsmen, local *darzis* (tailors), textile mills, small garment workshops, textile and garment technologists, designers, brands : Indian and foreign, fashion media, stylists, etc. and consumer is ever ready to accept the fashion representations for instant gratification. The technological innovation that has gone in the textile and apparel manufacture doesn't even find mention in a layman's world of fashion, where glamour and beauty take prominence and the represented garment is what matters the most. The real garment and the worn garment are beyond the purview of fashion consumer. However conscious efforts by the providers of fashion towards sensitizing and communicating the story of the fashion product from the fibre to fabric or cradle to grave have given rise to the global awareness of Ethical Fashion. These initiatives may lead towards a more responsible Indian Fashion system and will positively Impact all the stakeholders in the value chain. The world is already looking at the Indian Fashion System and seeking to find its share.

The impact of the "Swadeshi" (produced in own country) movement was adoption of home-spun "Khadi" fabric for the Indian freedom fighter; representing the socio political affiliation towards nationalist agenda in the 1940's. The Nivi style drape or the Modern drape of sari which shows the transition from traditional, regional sari drape to more modern draping style had a unifying effect and further created a national dress code for women joining the mainstream freedom struggle. Never before was clothing style so evidently significant, as in the non- cooperative, nonviolent Indian freedom (1930-1947 AD.) struggle across the world history. This modern style of draping the sari was a neutral innovation to the regional sari draping style: the **Nivi** sari style conceived by Gyanodanandini Tagore (Nobel Laureate, poet Rabindranath Tagore's sister-in-law) went on to become a national dress for Indian women from late 19th century till date, a classic example of unity in diversity. During the British Raj, Gyanodanandini Tagore's husband who was a British government officer got a transfer, which required her to move away from the privacy of her ancestral home. She needed to adopt a

more modest costume. (Refer: The Sari: Mukulika)

The Salwar Kameez (loose trousers and tunic) suit had been a popular dress in the northern states of India, and has been constant on the fashion radar and has seen cyclic trends and variations across the decades. It has been popularized by the Bollywood portrayals and the local tailors as fashionable, practical and younger alternative to the Nivi (Modern) Sari which was essentially a dress code of the Modern Era. The acceptance of SalwaarKameez (Post Modern Indian dress code) across India as practical dress code has also been a huge contribution to the Indian Fashion System (Prof. Justina Singh in her doctoral research in the 1970's had predicted this trend), as this garment was not a part of costume tradition , other than the Northern states. Rest of India had various sari drapes or Ghaghra choli (skirt and Bodice) as a costume tradition. By the turn of the century with organized retail, ready to wear Shalwaar kammez was available to suit a faster lifestyle, however many women prefer custom made shalwaar kammez from their local darzi or also from the designer boutiques which came up by the turn of the century. Thus inclusion of the darzi or local tailor in the Indian Fashion System is pertinent; for his expertise to sew and fit some amazing sari blouses/choli (the Indian Bodice/corset) and sew custom made trendy salwaar kameez. The Kameez is essentially a tunic silhouette, and the post-modern women who were comfortable in denim jeans were happy to wear the *Kurti* (modified Kurta – to a shorter length and snugger fit). This Kurti is a wonderful example for the fusion space where the comfort of the Jeans and ethnic identity has been combined, also doing away of the long dupatta or being substituted with a shorter stole or scarf. The Kurti also was modified to Kaftaan (Loose Robe without attached sleeves) silhouette. The Kurti (Tunic) trend coincided with the trend of tunic tops in the western fashion. The popularity of the skinny jeans and leggings led to the hybrid jeggings. This also triggered the trend for comfortable Knitted - spandex blend, leggings, substituting the bias cut fitted **chudidar pyjamas** (bias cut fitted Indian trouser variations, often cumbersome to wear due to the desired snug fit). The ready to wear knit leggings are a huge leap towards acceptance of Knitwear in the Indian ethnic / fusion garment category which have been dominated by woven textiles. In early 2000 the knit sari blouse fad did not find much favor eventually. The technological innovations in terms of new fibers, fabric technology, garment manufacturing, dyeing and printing technology, supply chain, and retail formats have affected the Indian Fashion system favorably however it's not sufficiently featured in the fashion media communication to the consumers.

The fashion trends for ethnic revival and vintage fashion have led to incorporating the exquisite Indian heritage textiles: beautiful silk weaves and diaphanous cottons, dyed to perfection and cut in long, voluminous and layered silhouettes embellished with fine embroideries . The revival of the long paneled Kurta christened as "Anarkali Kurta", may have been taken inspiration from the western ball gowns and the classic Moghul dancer "Anarkali" popularized by the Bollywood film "Mughl-e-Azam" portrayed by the classic beauty Madhubala. The fascination with the ball gowns continues in the acceptance of Sari Gowns: pre stitched saris, that can be worn like a gown. Indian designers who have been trained in Western eveningwear pattern making, have incorporated the crinoline construction in ethic silhouettes of the Ghaghara, anarkali Kurta, etc to create the voluminous look , yet lighter in weight for the neue women to move around with improved ease.

Designer Jewellyn Alvares mentions, "With the internet, red-carpet events, the magic of Disney princesses and real-life princesses, everyone and their mothers want to be in a gown. The world recently has seen Kate Middleton (UK), Princess Charlene (Monaco), Sofia Hellqvis (Sweden). Closer home, Indian starlets like Deepika Padukone, Sonam Kapoor, Priyanka Chopra, Aishwarya Rai and others of the Bollywood brigade wear Gowns from both Indian and

International fashion houses on red carpets of award ceremonies, premieres and in endorsements.

Gowns have now got their pride of place. What was being a princess in your wildest dream, for an average girl has now become a reality. A white gown or hues of white is predominantly worn traditionally within the Christian community, or with the Iranian Muslim community. To the others, white is not worn, mainly for the cultural symbolisms, which consider white non celebratory. Hence colours of pastels, reds, magenta, gold and silver are the usual choices for bridal gowns. But jewel tones of maroons, blues and emeralds are also popular.

There are a mix of religions and nationalities, and the fervor to wear gowns has gotten even the most traditional Indian bride want to be a princess for a day, and hence colored gowns are worn for receptions, cocktail parties, sangeet's (pre wedding song and dance event) and minor lunches. Most weddings are now large scale and are revolve around a theme, this makes even the family and guests want to be dressed festively in a gown. And that is how gowns live it up."

This was seen as new trend in apparel categories for Indian ethnic wear for women: the occasional wear and the work wear. The occasional wear further categorized as party wear, bridal saris, designer saris etc. The party wear sari was an innovation to find an answer for the western evening gown, the black cocktail sari for the little black dress (LBD). The designer saris/ lehengas for the big Indian weddings inspired by the couture fashions, this trend is indicative of the turnover of Indian Hi-fashion apparel tilting towards Indian couture.

The sari and salwar kameez has evolved in its form and function and is worn for the following functions

- **Daywear :** At home/socializing/shopping

- **Work wear:** For household chores/ farm work/manual labor /performing arts /prostitutes/ /uniforms /institutional work in offices/schools/colleges/airlines/hotels/police/nursing/ in court of law / Board rooms/ on international deputations, etc.

- **Occasional wear:** (As Hostess/ Guest) for festivals, religious ceremonies, award ceremonies, formal dinners, weddings, house warming, baby showers, birthday parties, kitty parties, anniversaries, corporate luncheons/dinners, funerals too.

Figure 2: Vogue Magazine Reference for Designer Saris in 2010

Another prevalent practice of: adapting trends in western fashion to Indian ethic apparel: in terms of color, fabric, surface ornamentation techniques, cut and silhouette. Many efforts to apply western trend forecast for Indian ethnic apparel, without much tweaking and understanding of Indian consumer preferences have resulted in poor acceptance of

those styles.

Some good examples are a modest choli's adaptation to a slinky spaghetti strap, halter neck, bikini top, corset, bustier, jacket inspiration, leaving nothing to imagination. The Crop top trend can also be attributed to the fact that baring midriff is acceptable in India due to the ethnic costumes like sari and Ghaghara choli. Customized petticoats for the sheer sari draped seductively. The modern Indian women are fitness conscious & work out hard and are unapologetic about flaunting their assets in a flirtatious sari drape or may be at times they may succumb to peer pressure in pursuit of the elusive size zero. This could be one of the reasons for the trend of diminished use of Indian heritage textiles in saris for the young Indian women, which requires innovative options in terms of fall, drape, weight, visual appeal etc. which they will like and include in their wardrobe.

The Indian woman has adopted and assimilated a great variety of apparel in her wardrobe like the sari, the ***ghaghracholi, shalwarkameez***, western fashions like skirts, trousers, denims, dresses, gowns, sportswear etc. Along with occasion appropriate clothing for each of the roles she has acquired as a mother, daughter, wife, sister, friend, student, co-worker, boss, homemaker, entrepreneur, global citizen. etc. often replacing the dupatta which was an intrinsic part of Indian ensembles, be it the Ghaghara choli , or salwar kameez suit, is accessorizing skirts and tops and pant suit, as it meets the modesty and social acceptance needs. The sari alone has a market size of INR 24,020 crore = **USD 4.920 billion**, which forms almost 41% of womens wear market in India (Tecknopak 2010).Thus number and variety in types of fashion apparel will have a positive relationship with the role of women in society and her education level, profession.

Data interpretation on the online interview schedule administered to a sample size of 50 respondents for this study. Majority of respondents (84.6 %) were in the age group of 25-30 Years, 15.4% respondents were in the age group of 30-35 years .Highest number of respondents (46.2%) were employed in private sector, 30.8 % were students, 15.4% were self employed and 7.7% were home makers. Highest numbers of respondents (38.5%) were from the Apparel/textile field, 15.5 % each in retail and academics sector, and remaining 4 sectors employ 7.7% each. Highest no of respondents (46.2) had annual income range of 3-6 Lakh INR, 30.8 % upto 3 Lakh INR, 15.4% earn 6-9 lakh INR, and only7.7 % earn the maximum of 9- 12 lakh INR. Majority of respondents (61.5%) are unmarried and 38.5% are married.

The respondents have marked media as the highest factor for clothing selection, followed by Occasion, then Age, then education, followed by economic status and the least as social status. Majority of the respondents (69.2 %) respondents confirmed having a different wardrobe for occasion wear. Whereas a marginal 15.4 % respondents preferred wearing the same kind of clothes everyday and on occasions

Highest no. of respondents (60%) preferred wearing gown for parties and 44 % prefer it for formal evenings. Sari was preferred the most for attending weddings by 60% respondents, and 20% prefer it for own wedding and party wear/eveningwear each. However only 10 % wear it for festivals and 11.1% prefer it for formal evening and 16.7 % wear it of any other occasion. Lahenga choli is the most preferred ensemble by 80% of the respondents only 10 % wear it for attending wedding and they do not prefer a lahenga for any other occasion. The respondents missed out on Bridal accessories while giving preferences, however other sources of information indicate heavy accessorizing for own wedding and attending wedding. Accessories are most preferred by 66.7 % respondents for any other look for mix and match styling, as well as by 44.4%for formal evening look, followed by party wear by 20% and minimal 10 % prefer it for attending weddings and for festivals.

Postmodern Uplift by Home Born Designers

The versatile draped silhouettes & heritage craft traditions redefined for contemporary connoisseurs; have further led to the rising acceptance of Indian Ethnic/ fusion fashion as a paradigm shift for India to discern and emphasize local inimitability, to create a sense of belonging and stimulate consumption of a culturally promoted "*Global-Desi*" fashion dictum.

Many young designers have realized that the weddings are the opportunity where Indian consumers prefer to splurge and loosen their purse strings. The neue bride is well informed about the options available and is demanding in terms of getting the right look for the big day. It's an ideal situation both ways and one can witness the numerous bridal exhibitions and also the **Bridal Fashion Fashion weeks**. India couture week also has a good inclusion of ethnic and western silhouttes; most exciting is the fusion space.

Figure 3: Bollywood Celebrity Wedding Pictures

Figure 4

Women characters representing the distinct and mood on screen 70' till 2016 and influencing the Indian Fashion System.

Indian designer duo who was flag bearers of the design fraternity have been quoted in the June Issue of Vogue India, the feature Vogue view titled "Redefining India Modern by Abraham and Thakore" (Pg. no 106). David Abraham mentioned that India is a novice in the consumption game, the Indian fashion is luxury led, and there is a long way to go. They mentioned that the modern Indian women are independent and seek lots of experimental and nonconventional fashion statements to express themselves. They do wear saris, which are belted or worn with a jacket or trouser. He pointed out that; androgyny is part of Indian clothing tradition. Most Indian women's silhouettes apart from the sari are inspired by masculine silhouettes like **Kurta and Pyjama**. The Harem pants and Shalwar with a belt is very close, there are similarities to the mens *pyjama* also. He also mentioned that we are international with our exposure. approach and also realized our craft traditions and that he is pleased to see a lot of young designers exploring craft in their work and grappling with the notion of India Modern.

Success stories of retail brands like Fabindia and Anokhi by its founders of foreign origin, who recognized the potential of harnessing Indian crafts for contemporary tastes and ensuring craft sustenance are well known and pioneering in establishing ethical fashion brands with a story. They have grown to become iconic Indian brands worldwide.

The best fashion brands across the world have partnered with Indian manufacturers like the network clothing company, Gokuldas Images, Orient craft etc. as India has built a good infrastructure for garment manufacturing and affordable labour force across the country from the 70's. In the globalized world MNC in fashion have collaborated with retailers like Arvind brands, Reliance brand, Tata Trent etc, due to the regulations on foreign direct investment (FDI) in India. The Indian Fashion System's expansion has a positive relationship with Fashion MNC's partnering with Indian retailers and expanding their market share in India, having a huge youth population (demographic advantage).

The June 2015 Issue of Vogue India, the feature titled "What Happens in Rio; India – A love Story". (Pg. no 80 & 82) is an interesting feature about a very popular Brazilian soap-opera inspired by *saas-bahu* (mother-in law and daughter-in law)drama on Indian Television. This Emmy award winning citcom has an ensemble cast of Brazilian actor dressed in Indian ethnic fashions and shot in India, Dubai and Brazil. The most noteworthy part about this popular series is that many Brazillian designers have taken inspiration from the Indian costume in this series and have created quick selling fashion styles. Brazil and India are both BRICS nation on an upward trajectory for economic development. Thus the Influence of Indian Fashion System on Brazil is evident.

Kitoo Gupta, who has been designing for leading Indian brands and specialism in ethnic wear, endorses the fact that Indian Fashion calendar is planned to cater to consumer demands during regional festivals starting from August to December across India. Also the wedding season as per Hindu calendar sees a huge demand in bridal wear and the retail calendars are planned accordingly. Thus Indian fashion system incorporates the global calendar of Spring/summer and autumn/winter. India being a tropical country which experiences summer for almost 6 months and winter for 2 months and the other 4 months are the major festive period as most of the market prepares the major stock for this season. The monsoon/festive lines essentially cater to festive requirements and occasion wear. Autumn/winter is an extension of occasion wear and winter wear which is region specific. The collection for this season is a mini capsule collection just to add on the stock flowing from monsoon/festive.

All the Above Primary and Secondary Data Has Led to the Model Indian Fashion System

Table 1: The Indian Fashion System - Occasion Wear

SR.NO	APPAREL CATEGORY	SARI	SALW-AR KAMEEZ	BOTTOMS/TROUSERS	TOPS	SKIRTS	DRESSES	ACCESSO-RIES	FOOTWEAR
1	FOUNDATION GARMENTS			BRA,PANTY , SLIPS,CHEMISE,CORSET,THERMAL WEAR					
2	ETHNIC OUTER GARMENTS			CHUDIDAR, SHALWAR,STRAIGHT TROUSERS VARIATIONS, LEGGINGS	KURTA ,KURTI &CHOLI VARIATIONS	GHAGHRA	NA		CHAPPALS,JOOTIS, SANDALS
3	OVER GARMENTS			SHAWLS,CARDIGANS,SWEATERS,JACKETS,CAPE,PONCHO,PHIRAN,TRENCH COATS, SHERWANI,RAINCOATS				UMBRELLAS	GUMBOOTS & SNOW BOOTS
4	SEMI FORMALS			FULL LENGTH JEANS,COTTON PANTS ,JEGGINGS	FORMAL SHIRTS, TOPS, POLO T-SHIRTS, VEST,JACKETS	TAILORED SKIRTS	TAILORED DAY DRESSES	SCARVES, HANDBAG, LAPTOP BAG	SEMI-FORMAL SANDALS AND SHOES
5	EVENING FORMALWEAR			DRESSY TROUSERS	DRESSY TOPS,CORSETS, JACKETS	DRESSY SKIRTS	GOWNS, SHORT DRESSES, TUNICS,KAFTANS	CLUTCHES, BATWA COSTUME JEWELLERY ,MAKEUP.	DRESSY HEELS
11	FESTIVE/BRIDAL			DRESSY TROUSERS	BIKINI TOPS, CORSETS, KURTA ,KURTI &CHOLI VARIATIONS,JACKETS	CRINOLINE, LAHENGA, GHAGHRA		CLUTCHES, BATWA,COSTUME JEWELLERY ,MAKEUP.	DRESSY HEELS

From the in depth qualitative and quantitative study backed by observations & results it can be concluded that the number and variety in types of fashion apparel will have a positive relationship with the role of women in society, socio-political scenario, globalization, economic growth, education levels. The adoption of ethnic fashion styles during festivals is an expression of ethnic roots in the Post modern era. The wedding dress has become a costume with the expansion of the Indian fashion system over the decades and has a positive relationship with the attitude of the Indian society towards fashion. The Bollywood and soap opera costumes have a significant influence on the Wedding and festive fashions. The Indian fashion system is directly dependent on the festival and wedding calendar as major fashion buying is seen during that period for one's own family or for gifting.

The colonial legacy of evening formals and the gymkhana necessitated the introduction of "evening formals/party wear" in the Indian fashion system. (Nivi sari).The long evening gown and Crop tops have been include in the Indian fashion system. A scarf or stole is often replacing the dupatta which was an intrinsic part of Indian ensembles, be it the Ghaghara choli , or salwar kameez suit, is accessorizing skirts and tops and pant suit, as it meets the modesty and social acceptance needs. The classic Little black dress LBD has influenced the acceptance of black color in the Indian women's wardrobe for formal occasions. The Indian Fashion System's expansion has a positive relationship with Fashion MNC's and Bollywood productions partnering with Indian and expanding their market share in India, having a huge youth

population (demographic advantage). The Internet has made the Indian fashion more dynamic and women adopting fashion across borders rapidly.

CONCLUSIONS

The Indian shalwaar kameez and sari are different from the other national costumes like the Japanese Kimono and the Scottish kilt; everywhere one goes in India one will find women clad in these two classic styles. The fusion space in which Indian silhouette inspiration as well as Indian textile inspiration are interpreted in the form of Anarkali kurta to evening Gown or wedding gown to sari gown and a neo Sari aid in creating a hyperreality for the post modern women for occasion wear and transcend into their contemporary wardrobes even today.

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